



Statement Concerning Cut to UCHC Block Grant Funding

Thankyou Co-Chairs, Ranking members, and members of the Committee for the chance to speak today. I am Diomedes Tsitouras, Executive Director of the American Association of University Professors of the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC-AAUP). Our union represents 550 faculty whom engage in research of new discoveries, teach the next generation of healthcare professionals, and treat countless members of the public. I am here today to thank you for your past investment in UCONN Health and also to ask you to continue this progress.

The challenges you face in reducing the state budget deficit are daunting and I don't envy the task before you. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and urge you to minimize the cuts to UConn Health.

The Governor's budget calls for an 8% decrease to the UCHC block grant. I urge you to reject this cut as it would thwart UCONN Health as a regional economic driver of bioscience and innovation. More significantly, they may put patient care at risk.

Since I began in this job, I have personally met with some of our new young faculty hires, in psychiatry, oral health, and general medicine. Many have expressed excitement about becoming a part of growing and thriving campus and what a bioscience push means to Connecticut. I want to emphasize that UCONN Health is not just another agency. UCONN Health supports the generation of 5700 jobs and \$105 million in economic activity. As proposed, this budget jeopardizes one of the few sources of Connecticut's job growth. Furthermore, patient care is equally important. In the last year, UCONN Health received a Leap Frog Score of A in patient safety, as well as praise from Consumer Reports, ranking it higher than many leading national institutions. Cuts to UCONN Health could threaten this advancement by creating potential staff shortages and lessen other resources needed to provide adequate care to our most vulnerable residents.

Finally, our ability to find cures and support national initiatives like the President's Moonshot to cure cancer will also be put at risk. I urge you to restore the Governor's proposed cut. Thank you.

